

CRITICISM: Maryland  
My Maryland

DRAWER 26

CRITICISM

71.2205 D85 04766



# Criticism of Abraham Lincoln

## Maryland, My Maryland

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

## **Maryland song blasted by black senator**

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — (UPI) — A black state senator, calling the lyrics to the Maryland state song "war-like and divisive," asked the legislature to seek a new song before the bi-centennial celebration.

Sen. Clarence Blount noted that "Maryland, My Maryland" includes phrases such as "avenge the patriotic gore," "northern scum" and "gird the beauteous limbs with steel." The Baltimore educator said the words are "objectionable to many citizens for their war-like and divisive connotations."

Cleveland  
Press  
121 673

Balto, Sunday Sun  
9/30/79

## Anthem

Howard Denis, a state senator from Montgomery county, wants to dump Maryland's state song. This is a legislative matter because the lyrics are incorporated in state law.

Mr. Denis's objection to "Maryland! My Maryland!" isn't to the tune, which of course is borrowed from the German carol "O Tannenbaum," but to James Ryder Randall's mildly inflammatory Civil War lyrics, nine stanzas worth.

It seems to me Mr. Denis is throwing out the baby with the bathwater. We're all used to the tune, and nobody knows the words anyway. But if change must come, so be it. Here are some updated lyrics in search of a legislative sponsor:

O, you've got marvels by the score,

Maryland! My Maryland!  
With scenic vistas on the Shore,  
Maryland! My Maryland!  
Tin-pot demagogues galore  
Taking bribes in Baltimore  
Where Spiro T. once tended store.

Maryland! My Maryland!

Statewise, you've got sex appeal,

Maryland! My Maryland!  
No better place to cut a deal,  
Maryland! My Maryland!  
With crabs and muskrats, beer  
and steel.

The Block where pudgy ladies  
peel,

You ain't no second-rate  
schlemiel,

Maryland! My Maryland!

You're famed for Garrett's  
mountain slopes,

Maryland! My Maryland!  
And Calvert Cliffs' hot isotopes,  
Maryland! My Maryland!  
Developers who know the ropes  
Still pass around white envelopes

(Tough luck, you law-abiding  
dopes)

In Maryland! My Maryland!

By Peter A. Jay

It's said by some you're run by  
hacks,

Maryland! My Maryland!  
Who ride upon the people's backs,

Maryland! My Maryland!  
What nonsense! Those are nasty  
cracks;

Pay no attention and relax  
'Til they "reform" the income  
tax.

In Maryland! My Maryland!

Ignore the snickers of the rest,  
Maryland! My Maryland!  
In your heart you know you're  
best,

Maryland! My Maryland!  
Your tycoons all are richly  
dressed

(in tweedy suits complete with  
vest)

So stick out—proudly, now!—  
your chest,

Maryland! My Maryland!

Look! In the red dawn of the day,  
Maryland! My Maryland!  
The numbers runners scoot  
away,

Maryland! My Maryland!

It's been made legal now to play  
On either shore of Chesapeake  
Bay,

But only with the state. OK?  
Maryland! My Maryland!

The other states all watch your  
dust,

Maryland! My Maryland!  
Your politics are much dis-  
cussed,

Maryland! My Maryland!  
Lawyers from your upper crust  
Engage in larceny after trust.  
And say Integrity's a must,  
For Maryland! My Maryland!

You're led today by Harry  
Hughes,

Maryland! My Maryland!  
Which may induce a moment's  
snooze,

Maryland! My Maryland!  
Marvin M's no longer news;  
He's slipped off in his snakeskin  
shoes

To join his lawyers on a cruise,

Maryland! My Maryland!

In size it's true she's fairly small,  
Maryland! My Maryland!  
But small's the fashion, please  
recall,

Maryland! My Maryland!  
So praise her loudly, one and all,  
At home and in the union hall,  
And even in the White Flint  
Mall,

Maryland! My Maryland!

Perhaps Mr. Denis could be per-  
suaded to give a rendition of this re-  
vised version at the opening of the  
World Series. That would be nice. But  
the important thing, of course, is that  
it be sung with spirit.

## Commentary

Cleveland Plain Dealer  
2/17/84

# Maryland, oh Maryland, honor thy past

GEORGE F. WILL

WASHINGTON — Eternal vigilance is the price of preserving just about everything, and a vigilant committee of the Maryland legislature has nipped in the bud a particularly wicked "reform." It has killed the bill that would have stripped "Maryland! My Maryland!" of its status as the state's song.

According to one legislator, if the bill had gone before the whole legislature, there would have been a "bloodbath." Good. Let there by no lukewarmness when traditions are in jeopardy.

The song is based on a poem written by an excitable secessionist after the riot that occurred when Union troops passed through Baltimore in April 1861.

Twelve rioters and four soldiers were

killed. The poem, a hymn to the Confederate cause, begins briskly:

*The despot's heel is on thy shore,  
Maryland!  
His torch is at thy temple door,  
Maryland!*

*Avenge the patriotic gore  
That flecked the streets of Baltimore.*

As a loyal son of the Great State (Illibots), I must admit that the song carries free speech too far. The "despot" referred to is Mr. Lincoln. The patriotic gore was, truth be told, seditious gore: If the rioters had not been bent on secession, Baltimore's streets would not have been flecked with them.

The poem canters along through nine stanzas, each bristling with stuff like:

*For life and death, for woe and weal,  
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,  
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,  
Maryland! My Maryland!*

The poem rises toward truculence ("Thy heaving sword shall never rust . . ."), dips briefly into pathos ("Dear Mother! burst the tyrant's chain, Mary-

land! Virginia should not call in vain, Maryland!"), then hits an operatic high note:

*But lo! There surges forth a shriek  
From hill to hill, from creek to creek  
Potomac calls to Chesapeake,  
Maryland! My Maryland!*

After some thoughts about the "crucifixion" of the Maryland soul, the poem roars to a worthy conclusion:

*She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb!  
Huzzah! she spurns the northern scum!  
She breathes! she burns! she'll come!  
She'll come!*

*Maryland! My Maryland!*

My goodness. Some of my best friends are northern scum. The poem and the song are, of course nonsense. But splendid nonsense. Leaving aside tasty crabs and tangy politics, Maryland is perhaps most famous for inspiring splendid nonsense, such as John Greenleaf Whittier's poem about Barbara Fritchie of Frederick. According to Whittier, when Stonewall Jackson's troops fired at her Union flag, Ms. Fritchie, age 90, spoke:

*"Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,  
But spare your country's flag," she said.  
A shade of sadness, a blush of shame  
Over the face of the leader came.*

*The nobler nature within him stirred  
To life at that woman's deed and word.  
"Who touches a hair of you gray head  
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said.*

Darn right he did. Oh, some spoilsports say Whittier embroidered the truth, but a bit of such embroidery hurts neither Stonewall nor Ms. Fritchie, nor thee nor me. Indeed, it is good for us when we encounter it a century later.

It preserves, like a butterfly in amber, the colorfulness of our shared past. It is an echo of honest passion in an age singularly short of such. Furthermore, we should find it fun and improving to reflect that we are descended from people for whom the exuberant language of "Barbara Fritchie" and "Maryland! My Maryland!" was as natural as the flattened language of news broadcasts and bureaucracies is to us.

Maryland's song has lost its power to inflame, but it remains instructive. And

attempts to sanitize what the past has passed on to us are disloyalties disguised as fastidiousness, disloyalties to our parent, the past.

The attack on Maryland's song was the work of an otherwise splendid state senator, Howard Denis, a Republican who thinks it wrong for a state's song to call for the violent overthrow of the federal government. (Many Republicans constantly call for that, in their hearts.) Being the forgiving sort, I assume the senator was just temporarily deranged by the stress of serving in a legislature where Democrats hold 165 of 188 seats. Such domination by the Democratic party gives fresh meaning to the words, "The despot's heel is on thy shore."

Any "reform" regarding the song would have placed Maryland on the slippery slope to ruin. If that "reform" had not been stopped dead in its tracks, a raging flood of awful modernization would, I do not doubt, have changed even the state's official sport. Which, by the way, is jousting.

ary 22, 1984

The Sun Wed 22/2/84

Baltimore Co. teacher's written her own version

## New lyrics for state song?

*The despot's heel is on thy shore,  
Maryland, my Maryland!  
His torch is at thy temple door,  
Maryland, my Maryland!  
Avenge the patriotic gore  
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,  
  
And be the battle queen of yore,  
Maryland, My Maryland!  
Maryland, My Maryland.*

—State song

By Gwen Ifill  
Evening Sun Staff

The ghost of the Confederacy still lurks in corners of the Maryland State Code and two state senators and a teacher from Baltimore County aim to drive it away.

They hope to accomplish their aims with a bill introduced by state Sen. John C. Coolahan, D-Balto. Co. The measure would provide new lyrics to the state's venerable musical trademark—"Maryland, My Maryland."

The new lyrics—less warlike than the Civil War-era original—were composed by Baltimore County music teacher Jeane Klender in 1982 for Maryland Day festivities at Relay

Elementary School.

Most of her elementary school students didn't understand the phrases like "panoplied array," or "peerless chivalry," which appear in the original version of the state song that was written by John Ryder Randall in 1861, Klender said yesterday.

"I had struggled many times to teach it, but children lose interest with all the difficult words," she said.

There were other problems.

For instance, the "despot" referred to in the first verse of the current version was Abraham Lincoln. "You don't want to shatter their faith in the president they honor," Klender said of that lyric.

Instead, Klender's version includes passages which refer to "diversity in race and creed" and "unity in times of need."

"I feel it is a uniting song," she said of her work.

The Coolahan bill would not abolish the 123-year-old version of the song which has been part of the state code since 1939, but it would satisfy some of the anthem's critics.

State Sen. Howard A. Denis, R-Montgomery, who introduced a bill to abolish the state song in 1980 and is a co-sponsor of the Coolahan measure, said he has always been unhappy with the old version.

"I'm sure it's the only state song which calls for the violent overthrow of the government," Denis said wryly.

The new lyrics will continue to be sung to the familiar melody of the Christmas song "O Tannenbaum."

A hearing on the bill before the Senate Constitutional and Administrative Law Committee in Annapolis introduced a new element to the sometimes staid world of legislative action—the music video.

In this one, about 100 students from Klender's school were shown singing the state song using their music teacher's new lyrics.

The new version has only four verses instead of the standard nine. And the words to the refrain are sung, "Maryland, our Maryland!"

Committee chairman Norman R. Stone Jr., D-Balto. Co., seemed very pleased by Klender's suggestion, and others who testified in favor of the



JEANE KLENDER

"I feel it is a uniting song."

bill were genuinely pleased with the measure.

At a time when budget problems are weighing more heavily on legislators than state traditions, the fate of the state song is pleasant diversion.

"It's a refreshing break from unfunded liabilities and such," Denis said.

# The Wash. Post Wed. 2/22/84

## Backers of Updated Maryland Song Aren't Whistling 'Dixie'

By Michel McQueen  
Washington Post Staff Writer

ANNAPOLIS, Feb. 21—Music teacher Jeane Klender had not realized Maryland's state song was so provocative until a fellow instructor in the Baltimore County schools asked her to teach it to some second graders for a Maryland Day celebration two years ago.

First there was the matter of all the big words. "By the time I would explain what 'panoplied array' was, they'd lose interest," said Klender, who believes students should know what they are singing about.

More importantly, however, was the matter of content. "Maryland, My Maryland," written in 1861 by James Ryder Randall, is, it seems, a frankly pro-Confederate call to arms.

It includes references to "Northern scum" in the last verse and to Abraham Lincoln, as a "despot" in the first, and cries to join Confederate Virginia and overthrow the federal government: "Avenge the patriotic gore that flecked the streets of Baltimore," being one example.

"How are you going to explain that the despot . . . is President Lincoln?" said Klender.

der. "I told [the students] what a despot was. I didn't tell them which one."

Eventually, Klender decided to compose her own lyrics. Her principal at Relay Elementary School liked her version so much that he urged her to submit it to the state government as an alternative to the original words.

That she did, and today the new lyrics received a public airing in the form of a hearing before the Senate Constitutional and Public Law Committee on a bill sponsored by Sen. John Carroll Coolahan (D-Baltimore County).

Coolahan, a lawmaker known for candor, told his fellow senators, "When they first brought this to my attention, my first reaction was, this certainly wouldn't be a priority of mine." But Klender's sincerity and the beauty of her lyrics won him over, he said.

First Klender proposed changing the title of the song, which is sung to the tune of "O Tannenbaum," to "Maryland, Our Maryland."

She wrote verses to honor, respectively, the state's geographic features, its history and patriots—such as Francis Scott Key—

See MARYLAND, C5, Col. 1

## Supporters of Updated Song For Md. Not Whistling 'Dixie'

MARYLAND, From C1  
the diversity of its people, and its ideals, purposes and future.

For example, the original song begins, "The despot's heel is on thy shore, Maryland! His torch is at thy temple door, Maryland!" Klender's version opens, "O join we all to lift our song, Maryland, Our Maryland/To home and state we've loved so long, Maryland, Our Maryland."

Another Klender verse goes, "From sons and daughters bold and free, Maryland, Our Maryland/Come deeds to live in history, Maryland/Our Maryland/Diversity in race and creed/Yet, unity in times of need/Together still we take the lead."

Coolahan told the committee that the lyrics would not replace the old poem, but merely would put an alternative in the state code. In 1980,

Sen. Howard A. Denis (R-Montgomery) unsuccessfully tried to do away with the state song.

Sen. Sidney Kramer (D-Montgomery) said the committee turned aside that attempt because "the Northern scum was wrong. But we need a state song. If you're going to change something, you ought to have something to replace it with."

Kramer said the committee would probably adopt the new lyrics.

Denis, cosponsor of Coolahan's bill, said his earlier battle "was like fighting the Civil War all over again, and the South won." Denis told the committee the old song is entrenched as a part of the state's history, having been adopted in 1939.

But he told the committee firmly, "If ever a state needed new lyrics, this one does."

# Rewritten state song endorsed by panel as alternative lyrics

Associated Press

A Senate committee has agreed to endorse an alternative set of lyrics for the state song for those Marylanders who don't like to think of Abraham Lincoln as a "despot."

The new lyrics would not replace the 123-year-old version of the song, but would provide an alternative for those who find the traditional words distasteful.

The song, part of the state code

since 1939, recalls with bitterness the passage of Union troops through Baltimore in 1861.

The lyrics were written by James Ryder Randall, a Marylander who lived in New Orleans during the Civil War. Maryland was a border state with split allegiances to the North and the South.

In the first verse of the song, Randall referred to Lincoln as a "des-

See SONG, Page 5, Col. 1

The Sun Sat. 3/25/84

## New version endorsed

SONG, From Page 22

"pot" and issued a call for revenge:  
"The despot's heel is on thy shore,  
Maryland, my Maryland!  
His torch is at thy temple door,  
Maryland, my Maryland!

Avenge the patriotic gore  
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,

And be the battle queen of yore,  
Maryland, My Maryland!"

The alternative lyrics, written by a Baltimore County music teacher and endorsed Wednesday by the Constitutional and Public Law Committee, would be less warlike. The new version, while also sung to the familiar melody of "O Tannenbaum," would have four verses instead of the standard nine. The first verse would read:

"O join we all to lift our song,  
Maryland, our Maryland.  
To home and state we've loved so long

Maryland, our Maryland.

From western mountains to the shore,

From countryside to Baltimore  
Salute the land that we adore.  
Maryland, our Maryland."

The teacher who proposed the new words, Jeane Klender, said her elementary school students had difficulty understanding phrases in the present song such as "panoplied array" and "peerless chivalry."

She also testified that the reference to Lincoln contradicted everything her students were being taught about the nation's 16th president.

The alternative version of the song includes passages which refer to "diversity in race and creed" and "unity in times of need."

Early next week, the full Senate is expected to take up the legislation proposing that the state give its seal of approval to a second set of lyrics.

# Maryland's Song

Jean KLENDER a music teacher at Relay, Md., Elementary School, thinks Maryland should change not its tune but its lyrics, and she has a point. The words to the state song, "Maryland, My Maryland," were written in 1861 by James Ryder Randall and show a secessionist fervor that is a little jarring these days. Remembering one conflict of that turbulent period, it urges all: "Avenge the patriotic gore that flecked the streets of Baltimore." There is reference to "Northern scum" and allusions to Abraham Lincoln as a "despot." Jean Klender proposes—and there now has been put before the state legislature—a song with the same

We would raise only two objections. First, although the Klender version is nice, we don't think it contains any expression quite so memorable as "patriotic gore." That would be a tough one to lose.

But more important and perhaps lessening the urgency for a change is the fact that Maryland has had these subversive stanzas as its state song since 1939 and has yet to show the slightest secessionist

tendency in this century. It continues to participate in interstate commerce, national elections and the World Series. Children on the streets of Baltimore do not curse the "despot" Lincoln; in fact the automobile that bears his name is widely respected in the state. Baltimore was once chosen as the site for the Phil Donahue show.

What explains this loyalty? To find out, we did a bit of research, paying close attention to what words were actually sung when the band struck up "Maryland, My Maryland" at patriotic occasions, crab-cracking fiestas and important horse races, and we have been able to compile something close to the real lyrics to the state anthem, which may go a long way toward explaining why Marylanders have not been stampeded into withdrawing from the Union. They are roughly as follows:

*Maryland, my Maryland*

*La de da de dum-ti-dum,*  
*Nuh nuh nuh nuh*

*Nuh nuh nuh nuh,*  
*Hm Hm Hm Hm Hm Hm*

*La na na naaah na na na na*  
*La la la la dum-ti-da*  
*O, na na na, o na na na*  
*Maryland, my Maryland."*

Feb 27, 1984

Washington Post

# Senate sings new song

**By C. Fraser Smith**

Annapolis Bureau of The Sun

Annapolis — Alternative lyrics to Maryland's state song, hailing the state's "diversity in race and creed yet unity in times of need," were adopted last night by the state Senate in a vote of 24-21.

Reversing its earlier rejection of the new verses, the Senate agreed to reconsider its earlier vote and — to the surprise of many in the chamber — adopted the words written by Jeanne Klender, an elementary school teacher from Relay.

The bill now goes to the House.

Some of those who supported the change object to stanzas of the Civil War-era song which call Abraham Lincoln a "despot," refer to "Northern scum" and urge Confederate sympathizers to overthrow the federal government.

A cosponsor of the bill, Senator John C. Coolahan (D, Baltimore county), called upon his colleagues to recognize the beauty of the proposed alternative lyrics and challenged them to overcome what he called their fear of change.

Senator Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. (D, Prince Georges) suggested that, if the words were to be changed, a statewide contest should be held.

Later, Mr. Miller said the proposed alternative lyrics celebrate slaveholders. At the same time, he said, the new verses fail to mention famous black Marylanders such as

Frederick Douglass, the writer, or Thurgood Marshall, the civil rights lawyer and U.S. Supreme Court Justice.

With that, Mr. Coolahan leaped to his feet.

"You don't want change," he said. "You're afraid of change."

Early in the debate, Senator Frederick C. Markus (D, Dorchester), who had objected to the alternative lyrics when they were rejected earlier, asked if the sponsor, Mr. Coolahan, would sing them. He said he thought it would be appropriate to hear the music.

"I do some singing late on Monday nights," Mr. Coolahan replied, "but it's usually far from these hallowed halls."

Then Mr. Coolahan turned the tables: "If I sing the song, will you vote for it?"

"That's carrying things entirely too far," Mr. Markus replied.

The Senator from Dorchester voted "no." But, by then, he was in the minority.

Schoolchildren may now read or sing words that speak of "Maryland, our Maryland/Twas built on Faith and Loyalty,/A lamp to love and Liberty,/Her future looks to you and me."

The Senate action does not change or remove the lyrics written originally by James Ryder Randall. Nor will there be new music to the nine-stanza song, which is sung to the tune of Richard Wagner's "O, Tannenbaum."

# Marylanders May Get Choice of State Songs

3/13/84

Special to The New York Times

ANNAPOLIS, Md., March 12 — In an effort to chase away the ghost of the Confederacy, the Maryland Legislature is working on an alternative version of Maryland's 123-year-old state song.

The alternative song, which would not replace the state song in the Maryland Code, has been approved by the Senate and is awaiting hearings March 22 in the House of Delegates. It is expected to pass there and be signed into law this spring by Gov. Harry R. Hughes.

The official state song, "Maryland, My Maryland," which is sung to the tune of "O Tannenbaum," refers to "Northern scum" in the last verse and to Abraham Lincoln as a "despot" in the first.

## Teacher Wrote New Lyrics

Its nine stanzas were written in 1861 by James Ryder Randall, a Maryland native then teaching in Louisiana who was outraged at the news of the wounding of a classmate by Union troops marching through Baltimore. The song urges Marylanders to join Confederate Virginia and overthrow the Federal Government.

"Avenge the patriotic gore/  
That flecked the streets of Baltimore," reads one verse still sung by thousands of Maryland schoolchildren every year.

The Senate last week adopted the alternative verses written by a Baltimore County elementary schoolteacher who said she simply could not explain the blatantly

pro-Confederate words to her pupils.

"How are you going to explain that the despot is President Lincoln?" asked the teacher, Barbara Klenner, who has written new verses honoring the state's geographic features; its patriots, like Francis Scott Key; its diversity of people and its ideals.

The official song begins:

*The despot's heel is on thy shore, Maryland.  
His torch is at thy temple door, Maryland.*

The new version opens with:

*Oh join we all to lift a song,  
Maryland, our Maryland.  
To home and state we've loved so long,  
Maryland, our Maryland.*

The Senate initially voted, 24 to 22, against accepting the alternative, only to revive the measure early this week with a 24-to-21 favorable vote.

## Lively Debate on Precedent

The proposed alternative song precipitated some of the most moving debates the Senate has seen so far this year.

Howard A. Denis, a Republican, said the old lyrics were a "despicable Confederate fight song dripping with hate."

But some opponents railed against "tampering with tradition," and others said it would set a bad precedent, with an alternative state dog, state motto and even state fish surely to follow.



The Sun Thur. 3/15/84

Jeane S. Klender directs a Relay Elementary School chorus class in the singing of her proposed alternative lyrics for the state song. They performed for the House Environmental Matters Committee.

The Sun/Robert K. Hamilton

## Children sing proposed state song for panel

By Richard H. P. Sia  
Annapolis Bureau of The Sun

Annapolis — Thirty-seven children, wearing smiles and red shoulder sashes bearing the name of their elementary school, stood in four neat rows outside a House committee hearing yesterday.

On a count of three, they bowed politely at the waist, practicing to acknowledge the applause expected after a performance only minutes away. Some of them giggled, while others looked in amazement at all the distracting talk and movement of lobbyists in the halls.

But on cue, all their eyes were on their choir director, Jeane S. Klender, and they dutifully followed her into the room where the House Environmental Matters Committee was holding a hearing on alternative lyrics to Maryland's state song.

In what was billed as "the first public performance" of an alternate version to "Maryland, My Maryland" — sung to the melody of "O, Tannenbaum" — the members of the Relay Elementary Matters Committee were holding a hearing on alternative lyrics to Maryland's state song.

See SONG, C3, Col. 1

## Children serenade House panel's hearing

### SONG, from C1

tary School junior choir sang four verses of the proposed version that passed the Senate.

And they added a new verse that Mrs. Klender, the lyricist, said she wrote in the last two weeks in response to criticism by Senator James C. Simpson (D, Charles).

In a recent Senate debate, Mr. Simpson said that, if the old words of lyricist James Ryder Randall are to be replaced in observance of Maryland's 350th anniversary this year, Mrs. Klender's lyrics, titled "Maryland, Our Maryland," should not omit references to the state's first settlers and the history of his district.

So with a cassette tape of a piano playing in the background, the children sang:

*On southern shores,  
By land so fair,  
Maryland, Our Maryland.*

*The Ark and Dove first anchored there,  
Maryland, Our Maryland.  
Where Calvert's vision burst anew,  
Where founders toiled to make it true,  
A state was born — from there it grew.  
Maryland, Our Maryland.*

"I certainly appreciate it, mentioning where it all began," Mr. Simpson said later, after someone read the new verse to him. "But that's why her version should not be adopted. It should be a statewide contest."

"She's already changed it because she left out a significant part of Maryland history," said Mr. Simpson, who opposed the Senate song bill. "Who knows what else she left out?"

Mrs. Klender, who told the House panel she took two years to write the new words, considers the Civil War-era lyrics in the current version "very confusing to children" and difficult to teach.

"I didn't write it to be politically oriented, I wrote for my children," she said.

A bill authorizing this new version or a set of alternative lyrics to the state song has been approved by the Senate and is pending in the House.

## ESSAY

# Patriotic Gore

By William Safire

*The despot's heel is on thy shore,  
Maryland, my Maryland!  
His torch is at thy temple door,  
Maryland, my Maryland!  
Avenge the patriotic gore, that  
flecked the streets of Baltimore,  
And be the battle-queen of yore,  
Maryland, my Maryland!*  
official state song

BETHESDA, Md., March 15 — The prettifiers, feelings-soothers and tidiers-up are loose among us. This well-intentioned bunch, if allowed its way, will rewrite our history and steal our national and personal memories.

The despot referred to in Maryland's state anthem, which is sung to the tune of "O Tannenbaum," is Abraham Lincoln; the patriotic gore came about after Union troops shot at pro-Confederate demonstrators in Baltimore, causing some of the earliest casualties of the Civil War.

Barbara Klender, a schoolteacher, finds those lyrics outrageous, entirely unsuitable to the latest generation. She has rewritten the state song, changing "The despot's heel is on thy shore" to the innocuous "Oh join we all to lift a song," and doing away with offensive references to "the tyrant's chain" and "northern scum."

Howard Denis, my local State Senator and an otherwise sensible fellow, has professed to be "appalled" by this "despicable Confederate fight song dripping with hate" and is pressing a bill to revise it lest the anthem set our schoolchildren at each other's throats.

I don't want to stir up old passions, but Maryland was a slave state with strong anti-Union sentiment. Detective-bodyguard Allen Pinkerton had to slip the new President through Baltimore in the dead of night and in disguise on the way to his inauguration in Washington. In cracking down on the disloyal element in Maryland, President Lincoln usurped Congress's power to suspend habeas corpus and authorized arbitrary arrests, and went on to dispatch General McClellan to arrest Maryland legislators before they could meet to vote secession.

These Presidential actions may be described in history classes as having been necessary and in a good cause, but if practiced by a Central American ally today would rightly be denounced as "despotic."

If some student, lustily singing the state song in school assembly, is inspired by the once-incendiary words to ask his teacher who the supposed despot was, or what the trouble in Baltimore was all about, does education suffer? Of course not; in our art and artifacts can be found the vestiges of the issues that aroused our ancestors, and

we should do all we can to preserve rather than obliterate them.

Take a related smoothing-over: From Noah Webster to John Dewey, educators have been railing at the confusion caused by pronunciation, and some simplifiers have urged that words like "rough" and "cough" be spelled "ruff" and "cawf."

In most cases, spelling reform is not a good idea. If you change "neighbor" to "nabor" you lose the clue provided by the "neigh" — that someone is nigh, or nearby. Similarly, if you drop "the" in "the Bronx" you lose the connection with the family who once owned the farm up there, and the sense of "going to visit the Bronx."

The tidiers-up want to remove confusion from language just as they want to remove offense from anthems, and as they want to expunge archaisms from Biblical translations. Instead, these modern political Bowdlers strip away our links to history.

Since this is, after all, a political column, consider the curious controversy about the changing of the name Hartpence to Hart. The Senator says a genealogist told him that the name was originally Hart, but that around the time of the American Revolution, when Hessians were fighting as mercenaries for King George III, the name Hart sounded suspiciously Germanic; therefore, when a Hart forebear married another with the last name of Pence or Penz, the less Germanic Hartpence was formed.

With such a rich etymology, why clip that name to Hart? The Senator says his mother wanted to "revert to the original name"; skeptics suggest that the image-conscious politician preferred the short name for its similarity to the word "heart" and for its readability on posters. (Short names are especially good for Presidential candidates, as Dwight Eis and John Kenn have shown.) It is tempting to fix up your name — I added an "e" to mine to clarify pronunciation — but you run the risk of ripping up roots.

Therefore, wordsmen, spare that tree. Connecticut recently adopted "Yankee Doodle," an old English mockery of colonials, as its state song; good idea. Florida should stick with "Old Folks at Home," which has never been more apt, despite its use of "massa" and "darkie."

Maryland, home of the smollygaster, need not protect its schoolchildren from the echoes of passions of a century ago. Lincoln's decisions can stand second-guessing from a century away, and it will not harm our schoolchildren to wonder why, long ago, patriotic gore flecked the streets of Baltimore.

THE sleazy lyrics of Maryland's state song have been kept out of the official Maryland Manual. Prudent Marylanders can find all nine turgid verses in Article 41 Section 79 of the Annotated Code of Maryland at libraries and lawyers' offices.

Since it is one of the few state anthems that anyone can identify, many well-meaning versifiers have offered inoffensive alternatives, most along the lines of "America in

By Daniel Berger

Microcosm the Beautiful." Such efforts reached a crescendo in the Thirties along with the frenzy to adopt "Maryland! My Maryland!" as the state song.

What is not in dispute is that the official lyrics of Maryland are anti-American; abuse the majority of Marylanders as "Northern scum;" condemn Abraham Lincoln as a "despot" and "Vandal;" use "Liberty" for the enslavement of Americans; foment violence to overthrow the Constitution and for its own sake; use sexist imagery; and are so susceptible to pornographic interpretation that one may wonder if the poet did not intend it so.

But when such people as state Senator Howard A. Denis or state Senator John C. Coolahan or the lyricist Jeane Klander try to clean up this embarrassment, they are heaped with scorn by Maryland-domiciled journalists solemnly citing History.

Thus, George F. Will wrote, in 1980: "Maryland's song has lost its power to inflame but it remains instructive. And attempts to sanitize what the past has passed on to us are disloyalties disguised as fastidiousness, disloyalties to our parent, the past."

And William Safire wrote, a few days ago: "The prettifiers, feelings-soothers and tidiers-up are loose among us. This well-intentioned bunch, if allowed its way, will rewrite our history and steal our national and personal memories."

What past? Whose memories?

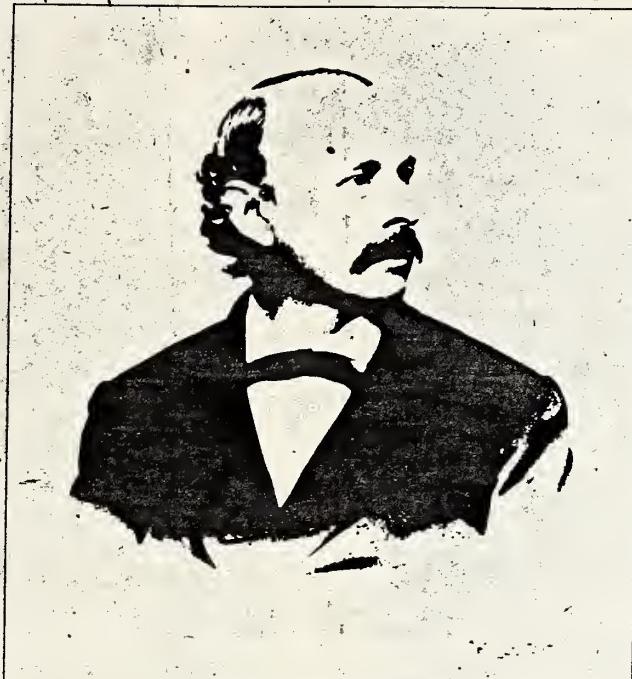
There was a Confederate-sympathizing mob in Mobtown. Slave-owning politicians conspired for a rump session of the General Assembly to secede, but were thwarted by federal arrest. Federal cannon were trained on Baltimore.

City and state remained in the Union. Many Marylanders thought this wrong. Probably most approved. So numerous were Germans, Quakers, free blacks, small farmers, artisans, Pennsylvanians and others loyal to the Union that the state could hardly have been delivered to the Confederacy.

When the Pratt street battle between a Baltimore mob and Union troops in April, 1861, was reported, a Maryland-born English teacher in Pointe-Coupee, Louisiana, named James Ryder Randall, could not sleep. He rushed to write out his emotions by candlelight.

Randall's verses were printed in a New Orleans paper and came to Baltimore. Some people sang them to a popular tune, "Ma Normandie." Two young ladies of ardent Confederate sympathy, Hettie and

Balto Sun  
Whose Maryland?  
3/26/84



James Ryder Randall



Jennie Cary, adapted them to another tune, "Laurige Horatius." Jennie was the true author of the alteration that has reverberated down the years, changing Randall's one-word refrain, "Maryland!" to "Maryland! My Maryland!" to fit the music.

The Cary sisters took their work to a publishing house where a German-born, Confederate-sympathizing, music teacher named Charles Ellerbrock substituted the tune's German ancestor, "O Tannen-

baum."

Jennie traveled behind the lines in Virginia to sing "Maryland! My Maryland!" to enthralled Confederate troops. "The Marseillaise" of the Confederacy was born — to be sung against Maryland by her foes pleading for more defectors.

Decades after Reconstruction, Baltimore found its commercial role as the northern port ideologically acceptable to Southerners. Maryland became more Southern than it had ever been. Blacks lost rights

they had enjoyed. Public statuary in Baltimore commemorating Confederate heroes dates from a rewriting of history at the turn of the century.

In 1922, President Harding in a patriotic address at Fort McHenry referred to "Maryland! My Maryland!" as a former passion-rouser that had lost its power. In 1934, two of the milder verses were included in the state's Tercentennial celebration. The next year, a bill making all of it the state song was passed by the General Assembly, but vetoed by Governor Harry Nice for offensive language.

An outpouring of suggested improvements in the public prints at that time reflected many points of view: Historic, ("On fair St. Mary's glittering strand/ Maryland! My Maryland! There stood of old a pilgrim band, etc."); feminist ("Thy heroes make a shining list. . . And Margaret Brent, first feminist"); prohibitionist ("I will not eat my waffles brown, Alongside one who gulps beer down").

But in 1939, the centenary of Randall's birth, his verses as improved by Jennie Cary were enacted as the state song. As recently as 1962, state Senator Frederick Malkus offered an anti-reapportionment improvement ("The Legislature is no more/ The court now writes thy legal lore/ The Constitution they deplore/ Maryland, My Oklahoma").

A Californian heard the tune in New York and wrote a California version in 1913, which became that state's official song in 1951. At least five other states have pinched it.

In England, a Socialist named Jim Connell wrote "The Red Flag," ("The workers' flag is deepest red/ It shrouded oft our martyred dead,") now a beloved anthem of the left wing of the Labor Party. Connell insisted that he had set the words to an old Jacobin hymn, "The White Cockade," and been disserved by the publisher using the Maryland tune.

American Communists sang "The Red Flag" lustily at Depression-era rallies. Translated, it became the illegal anthem of the Communist Party of Japan. One of the more inane dispatches on Sun microfilm from the Thirties recounts the distress of an Annapolis traveling salesman in Kyoto who burst into "Maryland! My Maryland!" only to be reproved by his anti-Communist geisha entertainer.

Will and Safire may have provided the definitive argument against substituting the prettified "My country, 'tis of thee," for the historically authentic "God Save the King." But they shed no light on "Maryland! My Maryland!"

That song is as American as the Ku Klux Klan and as patriotic as the Communist "International," which is no reason to compel anyone to sing it. It is undeniably authentic — by an exile who remained an exile espousing a Maryland-minority opinion. Its adoption in 1939 as the official state sentiment was an act against history. Its retention now is faithful to Maryland politics of the 1930s, not of the 1860s. That's sacred?

The "historical" argument for retention is a joke. The only valid argument would be agreement with the words in the song.

## Marylanders' Case Against Lincoln

To the Editor:

As another of Maryland's "exiled sons," I read with indignation your March 13 account of legislative efforts to supplant the state's hallowed song with a schoolteacher's puerile pap.

Her justification for having the effrontery to rewrite this classic is that she is having difficulty in explaining to her students that the "despot" referred to in one of the stanzas is President Lincoln. This only demonstrates that she is as poor a student of history as she is a versifier. A review of almost any text about the Civil War will disclose that Marylanders rightly regarded Lincoln as a despot.

He suspended habeas corpus in order to incarcerate many prominent Maryland citizens suspected of anti-Government views. He seized private property without compensation and subjected Baltimore to unwarranted military occupation. Passing through the city, his troops fired on a demonstration, killing and wounding over a score of protesters. This incident, which prompted James Ryder Randall's composition, was nothing less than an early-day Kent State. Any one of these acts, if committed today by Ronald Reagan, would lead to a drumhead media trial followed by demands for impeachment.

The proposed substitute represents an attempt to impose upon Marylanders revisionist history. If we accept it, we are truly in George Orwell's 1984 and might as well go one step further: There is another song written by a Marylander, at a time when the city of Baltimore was equally threatened with invasion, that could be bowdlerized: the Star-Spangled Banner. After all, we are currently friends with the British, so why memorialize old wrongs?

CHARLES C. RETTBERG JR.  
Shaker Heights, Ohio, March 15, 1984

NY Times  
3/26/84

**'Foul Footstep' Erased**

*NY Times*

To the Editor: 4/16/84

In protesting the attempt to revise the Maryland state song, Charles Rettberg (letter March 26) suggests we take revisionist history one step further and "bowdlerize" another song written by a Marylander, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

He is a bit late. The second and third stanzas of Francis Scott Key's poem are customarily omitted out of courtesy to the British. How many people are familiar with the line  
*Their blood has wash'd out their foul  
footstep's pollution?*

MICHAEL MILLER  
Cambridge, Mass., March 26, 1984

## Anti-War Maryland

**I**T SEEKS unfair, on its 350th birthday, that Maryland should be delivered into the hands of the Confederate government which failed, so consistently, to shake the state's attachment to the Union during the Civil War.

It is always possible to construct satisfying myths from the events of the past. History is an uncertain

By Jean Baker

messy endeavor, not subject to the same kind of verification used in the natural sciences.

Still it is a considerable slander on the commitment of mid-Nineteenth Century Marylanders to transform them, as a group, into Confederate supporters [See "Maryland Coerced," Opinion Commentary, April 6].

Certainly there were some in those uncertain days of 1860 and 1861, who publicly supported the South and opposed the Lincoln government. But a vote against Lincoln in 1860 was hardly a vote for a Confederate government that did not exist until the winter of 1861.

American presidential elections are not, and never have been, referendums on single issues, and the 46 percent of the all-white, all-male electorate who supported Breckinridge were voting for a border state Democrat whose platform and previous behavior was based on the Unionism of states' rights, not the secessionism of state sovereignty.

In 1861 when the war began, some Marylanders did leave the state to form a Maryland Line within the Confederacy. Yet their numbers were, at any given time during the war, less than a third of the number of Marylanders who had volunteered to serve the Union.

Other Southern-sympathizing Marylanders stayed home in order to harass the government by sabotaging rail lines (as John Merryman did in June of 1861), and sending arms and secrets to the enemy. It was these acts of subversion and terrorism that led to the arrival of federal troops.

Still, throughout the war, a much larger group of Marylanders were pro-Union. These were the men who, in a critical election in the fall of 1861, without any interference from the government, voted two-to-one for the Unionist candidate for governor, Augustus Bradford, over his States Rights opponent, Benjamin C. Howard.

These were also the Unionists who refused to assist General Robert E. Lee when he crossed the Potomac in 1862 expecting a "general uprising of the people" to relieve Maryland from an incorrectly assumed "foreign yoke." Like some Marylanders today, General Lee had been deceived about the state's attachment to the South.

Somehow the middle ground has been lost in this controversy. What Marylanders wanted in 1861 was neutrality. "Let them (the South) go in peace" was a frequently heard refrain before the South attacked the Union at Fort Sumter. Because they lived in a border state, Marylanders feared that their backyards would become the bloody cockpits of war, as indeed they did at Antietam, and the 31 lesser engagements fought in the state.

Too often forgotten amid the militaristic boast of Civil War history is an essential message of Maryland's thinking and behavior in 1861. Marylanders were for Maryland and against war.

Jean Baker teaches history at Goucher College.



JAMES R. RANDALL

Balto. Sun

BALTIMORE 6/3/84

## State song is defended at memorial ceremony

Children in lace-edged dresses and wide-brimmed hats played among old tombstones while their parents defended the pro-Confederacy state song as about 100 people gathered at Loudon Park Cemetery yesterday to remember the Confederate war dead.

After a band played James Ryder Randall's "Maryland, My Maryland," a medal was presented to Nelia Kreite, whose father was a Confederate soldier. He had enlisted at the age of 14, and was wounded twice before being captured and spending six months in prison. Mrs. Kreite was presented with the "Medal for a Real Daughter."

The event was organized by the Maryland divisions of United Daughters of the Confederacy and Sons of Confederate Veterans, who said similar ceremonies had been held at the cemetery, where 600 Confederate dead are buried, continuously since the Civil War.

An honor guard dressed in period costume fired a 21-gun salute, and afterward the crowd broke into smaller groups. The recent flap in the Maryland legislature over the state song, which refers to Abraham Lincoln as a "despot" and Union troops as "Northern scum," was one of the topics of conversation.

The unsuccessful attempt to change the lyrics was called "revi-

sionist" by David Hammett, Jr., who said that a proposed alternative version of the state song failed to convey the spirit and the loss of the Confederacy.

"It's about the blood that was spilled for our rights," he said.

Mary Trippe, another participant in the ceremonies, said that the state song should be left alone. "We don't want to fight the Civil War again," she said.

**P**ROFESSOR Jean Baker ("Anti-War Maryland," *Opinion* • Commentary May 7) attempts to refute my demonstration ("Maryland Coerced," *Opinion* • Commentary April 6) that in 1860-61 a majority of Marylanders opted for the South.

First, Professor Baker argues that a vote in 1860 for the Southern Democratic presidential candidate,

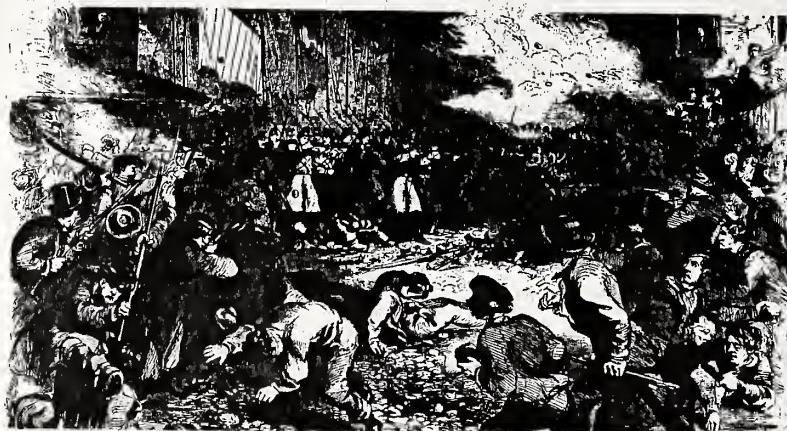
By Brice M. Clagett

Breckinridge, who carried Maryland, was not necessarily a vote for secession. But a glance at a map of the 1860 election is enough to confirm the correlation between states carried by Breckinridge and states that opted for secession once the chips were down. A Breckinridge vote was far more than a vote "against Lincoln," as Professor Baker describes it; it was also a vote against Douglas, the Union Democratic candidate, and Bell, the fence-straddler. Maryland divided its votes among the candidates almost exactly as did Georgia, and in more secessionist proportions than Virginia, Tennessee and Louisiana. Every state carried by Breckinridge seceded except Maryland, which would have done so but for Lincoln's military conquest, and Delaware, which had no choice once Maryland had been suppressed.

Second, Professor Baker refers to the Marylanders who fought for the Union as having "volunteered." Surely Professor Baker knows that Lincoln had a military draft. Many thousands of Marylanders served the Union out of compulsion, not conviction.

Finally, Professor Baker claims

## Maryland for Breckinridge



From Frank Leslie's "Pictorial History of the Civil War":  
Baltimore civilians clash with Union (Massachusetts) troops, April, 1861.

that in the fall of 1861 Marylanders, "without any interference from the government," voted 2-to-1 for Bradford, the Unionist candidate for governor. The facts are that federal troops were stationed at the polling places; proclamations were prominently posted urging any one to report "disloyal" persons attempting to vote; large numbers were arrested, both before and during election day; prospective voters were asked, without a shadow of lawfulness, to take loyalty oaths, and were denied the ballot if they declined; and out-of-state soldiers of the occupying army were not only allowed but encouraged to vote: "Massachusetts

soldiers were known to have boasted in Boston that they voted on that day in Baltimore, as often as they pleased." The facts are set forth in detail in volume 3 of Scharf's "History of Maryland," at pages 457-60.

In this "shameless mockery of an election" (Scharf, p. 460) even foreigners were arrested, which provoked Lord Lyons, the British minister, to protest to the Union Secretary of State. Seward's reply is revealing: "that, as to the recent arrests, they had almost all been made in view of the Maryland elections; that those elections would be over in about a week's time, and that he hoped then to be able to set at libe-

tality all the British subjects now under military arrest."

Lord Lyons reported to his government: "The violent measures which have been resorted to, have gone far to establish the fact that Maryland is retained in the Union only by military force. They have undoubtedly increased the dislike of the people to their Northern rulers."

A footnote: The edited version of my April 6 article said that "members of the legislature" met at Frederick in April 1861 and passed (by overwhelming majorities) resolutions which confirmed Maryland's Southern sympathies and expressed

outrage at Lincoln's military oppression. I wrote that "the legislature" met, and that is correct. It was duly convened and fully officia session of the representatives of the people of the state. It was the last such session for the duration, for many of the members resided in Northern jails thereafter.

Secretary of War Cameron's order to General Banks was in these urgent terms: "The passage of any act of secession by the Legislature of Maryland must be prevented. If necessary, all, or any part of the members must be arrested. Exercise your own judgment as to the time and manner, but do the work effectively." Banks in turn ordered Colonel Ruge of Wisconsin: "You will hold yourself and your command in readiness to arrest the members of both Houses." "Among them are to be especially included the presiding officers of the two Houses, secretaries, clerks and all subordinate officers. Let the arrests be certain and allow no chance of failure. The arrests should be made while they are in session, I think. Any resistance will be forcibly suppressed, whatever the consequences."

At least 23 members of the legislature were locked up, along with the secretaries and clerks, the mayor, marshal and police commissioners of Baltimore, the editors of leading Baltimore and Annapolis newspapers, Baltimore's U.S. Congressman Henry May, Francis Scott Key's grandson, and many more.

Secretary Cameron and General Banks, I think, were in a better position than Professor Baker to judge whether these measures were necessary to prevent Maryland's secession or not.

Brice M. Clagett is former chairman of the Maryland Historical Trust.

## Md. lawmakers stung by state song

Monday - 2/16/2009, 11:19am ET

wtop.com

Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. - "Maryland, My Maryland," the state song which "spurns the Northern scum," stings the legislators, too, even if some don't know the words.

"Actually, I really have never paid a lot of attention to the words," said Delegate Pamela Beidle, D-Anne Arundel, who introduced a bill in the House to change the lyrics of the state song to pay tribute to Maryland rather than express "Confederate sympathies."

She said letters of protest from fourth grade students at Glen Burnie Park Elementary School opened her eyes to the song's bias.

The lyrics are from a poem written by James Ryder Randall in Louisiana in 1861 called "Maryland, My. Maryland," and convey anger at Union troops marching in Baltimore.

Beidle hopes to change the lyrics to a poem of the same name written 33 years later by John T. White, a Frederick County native and former superintendent of Maryland Schools.

White's poem talks of "wooded hills" and "brave souls," as opposed to Randall's "despot's heel" and "Huzza!"

But the latest attempt to change the state song is not as drastic as it seems. Beidle wants the tune -- "O Tannenbaum" by Lauriger Horatius -- to remain the same.

People who never knew the words would still be able to hum along to a song they know better as "O Christmas Tree."

"I'm ashamed to say I can't remember the lyrics to it very well," said Anne Garside, director of communications for the Maryland Historical Society.

Garside said that despite having little knowledge of what the song says she would be open to "changing any language (of an official anthem) that doesn't reflect our current inclusive attitudes."

Delegate Mary Ann Love, D-Anne Arundel, agrees the lyrics aren't "attuned" to the attitudes of the day, even though she too, isn't quite sure what the lyrics say.

"I'm standing here reading the lyrics right now," she said. "It is a historic song, but looking at (the lyrics), they are pretty harsh."

But not as harsh as pushing history aside for political correctness, said the president general of the Daughters of the Confederacy.

"I hate it when parts of our history are pushed aside for political correctness," said Jane Durden. "Sometimes change is not good."

Change is what we need, said Delegate Jolene Ivey, D-Prince George's, another sponsor of the bill.

"As a state, we've moved on from glorifying the Confederacy, don't you think?"

If the words to the song aren't changed, Ivey said, "People will never sing it."

(Copyright 2009 by Capital News Service. All Rights Reserved.)

Copyright (c) 2014 WTOP RADIO



